

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. to 16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) A server determination apparatus, comprising:
receiving means for receiving an inquiry from a first one of a plurality of information distribution servers;

collection means for collecting network state information between a client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers;

server determination means for determining, based on a logical distance between the client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers should be accessed by the client which has accessed the first one of the plurality of the information distribution servers, in accordance with a first access from the client, and for determining, based on the network state information collected by said collecting means between the first access and a second access from the client, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers should be accessed by the client[[,]] which has accessed the first one of the plurality of the information distribution servers, in accordance with the second access from the client; and

informing means for informing the first information distribution server of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the client should access.

18. to 24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said collection means collects, as the network state information, at least one of a response time, a number of router steps, and a packet loss ratio between said client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

26. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said server determination means determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers based on the network state information and state information of each of the plurality of information distribution servers, in accordance with the second access from the client.

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said collection means collects at least one of a congestion degree, a number of packets, and a number of packet errors.

28. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 26, wherein as the network state information, said collection means collects at least one of a CPU load ratio, a CPU idle value, a number of connection links, and a disk load ratio of each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) A server determination apparatus, comprising:

receiving means for receiving an inquiry from a first information distribution server;

collection means for collecting state information of each of a plurality of information distribution servers;

server determination means for determining, based on a logical distance between a client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers should be accessed by the client which has accessed the first one of the plurality of the information distribution servers, in accordance with a first access from the client, and for determining, based on the state information collected by said collecting means between the first access and a second access from the client, which[[,]] one of the plurality of information distribution servers should be accessed by the client which has accessed the first one of the plurality of the information distribution servers in accordance with the second access from the client; and

informing means for informing the first information distribution server of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the client should access.

31. to 41. (Canceled)

42. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said server determination means determines one of a plurality of sites provided with the

plurality of information distribution servers, and determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers in the determined one of the plurality of sites.

43. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said collection means further collects at least one information of a response time, a number of router steps, and a packet loss ratio between said client and each of said plurality of information distribution servers.

44. (Currently Amended) The ~~network status server~~ apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said state information further comprises network state information in a plurality of sites provided with the plurality of information distribution servers.

45. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said collection means further collects at least one information of a congestion degree, a number of packets, and a number of packet errors in a plurality of sites provided the plurality of information distribution servers.

46. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 30, said collection means collects at least one information of a CPU load ratio, a CPU idle value, a number of connection links, and a disk load ratio of each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

47. to 75. (Canceled)

76. (Currently Amended) A server determining method executed by a server determining apparatus, the method comprising:

a receiving step of the server determining apparatus receiving an inquiry from a first one of a plurality of information distribution servers;

a collecting step of the server determining apparatus collecting network state information between a client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers;

a server determining step of the server determining apparatus determining, based on a logical distance between the client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers should be accessed by the client which has accessed the first one of the plurality of the information distribution servers, in accordance with a first access from the client, and determining, based on the network state information[[,]] collected by said collecting step between the first access and a second access from the client, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers should be accessed by the client which has accessed the first one of the plurality of the information distribution servers, in accordance with the second access from the client; and

an informing step of the server determining apparatus informing the first information distribution server of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the client should access.

77. to 83. (Canceled)

84. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 76, wherein said collecting step comprises collecting at least one of a response time, a number of router steps, and a packet loss ratio between said client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

85. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 76, wherein, as the state information, said server determining step determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers based on the network state information of each of the plurality of information distribution servers, in accordance with the second access from the client.

86. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 76, wherein, as the state information, when the network state information is collected, said collecting step comprises collecting at least one of a congestion degree, a number of packets, and a number of packet errors, in accordance with the second access from the client.

87. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 85, wherein said collecting step comprises collecting at least one of a CPU load ratio, a CPU idle value, number of connection links, and a disk load ratio of each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

88. (Canceled)

89. (Currently Amended) A server determination method executed by a server determining apparatus, the method comprising:

a receiving step of the server determining apparatus receiving an inquiry from a first information distribution server;

a collection step of the server determining apparatus collecting state information of each of a plurality of information distribution servers;

a server determination step of the server determining apparatus determining, based on a logical distance between a client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers should be accessed by the client which has accessed the first one of the plurality of the information distribution servers, in accordance with a first access from the client, and determining based on the state information collected by said collecting step between the first access and a second access from the client, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers should be accessed by a client which accesses the first one of the plurality of the information distribution server in accordance with the second access from the client; and

an informing step of the server determining apparatus informing the first information distribution server of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers.

90. to 100. (Canceled)

101. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 89, wherein said server determination means determines one of a plurality of sites provided with the

plurality of information distribution servers, and determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers in the determined one of the plurality of sites.

102. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 89, wherein said collecting step further comprises collecting at least one information of a response time, a number of router steps, and a packet loss ratio between said client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

103. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 89, wherein said state information comprises network state information in a plurality of sites provided with the plurality of information distribution servers.

104. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 89, wherein said collecting step comprises collecting at least one information of a congestion degree, a number of packets, and a number of packet errors in a plurality of sites proved with the plurality of information distribution servers.

105. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 89, wherein said collecting step comprises collecting at least one information of a CPU load ratio, a CPU idle value, a number of connection links, and a disk load ratio of each of said plurality of information distribution servers.

106. to 134. (Canceled)

135. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing a computer readable server determining program executed by a server determining apparatus, the program comprising:

a receiving step of the server determining apparatus receiving an inquiry from a first information distribution server;

a collecting step of the server determining apparatus collecting network state information between a client and a plurality of information servers;

a server determining step of the server determining apparatus determining, based on a logical distance between the client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers should be accessed by the client which has accessed the first one of the plurality of the information distribution servers, in accordance with a first access from the client, and determining based on the network state information collected by said collecting step between the first access and a second access from the client, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers should be accessed by the client which has accessed the first one of the plurality of the information distribution servers, in accordance with the second access from the client; and

an informing step of the server determining apparatus informing the first information distribution server of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the client should access.

136. to 142. (Canceled)

143. (Previously Presented) The storage medium according to claim 135, wherein said collecting step comprises collecting at least one of a response time, a number of router steps, and a packet loss ratio between said client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

144. (Previously Presented) The storage medium according to claim 135, wherein, as the state information, said server determining step determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers based on the network state information and state information of each of the plurality of information distribution servers, in accordance with the second access from the client.

145. (Previously Presented) The storage medium according to claim 144, wherein, as the state information, when the network state information is collected, said collecting step comprises collecting at least one of a congestion degree, a number of packets, and a number of packet errors, in accordance with the second access from the client.

146. (Previously Presented) The storage medium according to claim 144, wherein, as the state information, said collecting step comprises collecting at least one of a CPU load ratio, a CPU idle value, a number of connection links, and a disk load ratio of each of the plurality of information distribution servers, in accordance with the second access from the client.

147. (Canceled)

148. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing a computer readable server determining program executed by a server determining apparatus, the program comprising:

a receiving step of the server determining apparatus receiving an inquiry from a first information distribution server;

a collecting step of the server determining apparatus collecting state information of each of a plurality of information distribution servers;

a server determining step of the server determining apparatus determining, based on a logical distance between a client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers should be accessed by the client which has accessed the first one of the plurality of the information distribution servers, in accordance with a first access from the client, and determining based on the state information collected by said collecting step between the first access and a second access from the client, which one of the plurality of information distribution servers should be accessed which a client accessing the first one of the plurality of the information distribution servers in accordance with the second access from the client; and

an informing step of the server determining apparatus informing the first information distribution server of the determined one of the plurality of information distribution servers that the client should access.

149. to 159. (Canceled)

160. (Previously Presented) The storage medium according to claim 148, wherein said server determining step determines one of a plurality of sites provided with the plurality of information distribution servers, and determines the one of the plurality of information distribution servers in the determined one of the plurality of sites.

161. (Previously Presented) The storage medium according to claim 148, wherein said collecting step comprises collecting at least one information of a response time, a number of router steps, and a packet loss ratio between said client and each of the plurality of information distribution servers .

162. (Previously Presented) The storage medium according to claim 148, wherein said state information further comprises network state information in a plurality of sites provided with the information distribution servers.

163. (Previously Presented) The storage medium according to claim 148, wherein said collecting step further comprises collecting at least one information of a congestion degree, a number of packets, and a number of packet errors.

164. (Previously Presented) The storage medium according to claim 148, wherein said collecting step comprises collecting at least one information of a CPU load ratio, a CPU idle value, a number of connection links, and a disk load ratio of each of the plurality of information distribution servers.

165. to 177. (Canceled)

178. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein each of the plurality of information distribution servers includes the first information distribution server.

179. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 30, wherein each of the plurality of information distribution servers includes the first information distribution server.

180. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 76, wherein each of the plurality of information distribution servers includes the first information distribution server.

181. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 89, wherein each of the plurality of information distribution servers includes the first information distribution server.

182. (Previously Presented) The storage medium according to claim 135, wherein the each of the plurality of information distribution servers includes the first information distribution server.

183. (Previously Presented) The storage medium according to claim 148, wherein each of the plurality of information distribution servers includes the first information distribution server.